



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Commissioner

October 4, 2004

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons
Bilingual/ESL Coordinators

FROM: Isaac R. Bryant, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services

SUBJECT: English Language Proficiency Test

This letter is to provide you with up-to-date information regarding the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) plan to phase in a new English language proficiency assessment that conforms to the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). These requirements stipulate that limited English proficient (LEP) students be annually assessed to determine the progress they have made in learning English and that the assessment used be aligned to the state's English language proficiency and language arts literacy standards. To this end, the NJDOE has joined a consortium of 18 states led by the Council of Chief State School Offices that is developing an assessment tool that meets the specific provisions of NCLB for assessing the progress of students in acquiring English language proficiency.

New Jersey has been involved in the development and review of the assessment items, and several New Jersey districts have participated in the field testing of the grades 3-12 assessment this past Spring. The department's preliminary plans had been to phase in the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) as an operational test in the Spring of 2005. However, because the K-2 test is under development, we are postponing the implementation of the ELDA as an operational test until Spring of 2006. This will also allow districts sufficient time to align their ESL curricula to the state's recently revised English language proficiency standards.

In the meantime, districts should continue to use the three approved language proficiency tests to identify and annually assess LEP students. For more information regarding English language proficiency assessments, please visit the department's bilingual education website at http://www.nj.gov/njded/bilingual/resources/prof_tests.htm or call the Office of Specialized Populations at (609) 292-8777.

We appreciate your cooperation as we continue to work to ensure a comprehensive, standards-based assessment for English language learners.

IRB/JFC/RS/bm/g:RAQUEL/English Language Proficient Test Memo.

c: Members, State Board of Education
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